

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Niles Memorial Library

and or common Jay-Niles Memorial Library (Preferred for Listing)

**2. Location**

street &amp; number U. S. Route #4

not for publication

city, town North Jay, vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county Franklin code 007

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Library

**4. Owner of Property**

name Board of Trustees - Jay-Niles Memorial Library

street &amp; number P. O. Box 8

city, town North Jay, vicinity of state Maine 04262

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Franklin County Registry of Deeds

street &amp; number

city, town Farmington, state Maine

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title N/A has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ nodate ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check one**

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

**Check one**

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The two-story three-bay Jay-Niles Memorial Library is a restrained Colonial Revival style brick building. It stands on a terraced knoll which lends the building a measure of monumentality.

A double flight of concrete steps leads to the front (west) elevation and the central projecting vestibule which rises behind a pair of original lamp posts. This is the most highly detailed section of the exterior. The recessed two-leaf door is surmounted by a fanlight and bordered by a granite surround and keystone. Above this entrance is a stone plaque bearing the date of construction in Roman numerals. Paneled brick pilasters and quoins rise to a broad entablature bearing the name Niles Library, the entablature is decorated with carved wreaths at the corners and four stylized tryglyphs. Its cornice establishes a belt-course which carries around all but the rear elevation.

A trio of four-over-four double-hung sash windows in a wide granite surround occupies the second story and they rest below a second entablature. The frieze carries the words Memorial Hall and features a denticulated cornice which continues around three sides of the building. Its bed molding establishes a string-course linking the lintels of the second story windows. The vestibule is crowned by a curved parapet wall.

The deeply recessed walls on either side of the vestibule contain large multi-pane round-arched windows with granite imposts and keystones on the first story and trios of four-over-four sash on the second story. The fenestration pattern is repeated on the south side elevation with four groups of identical windows symmetrically placed. A similar pattern is established on the north facade with the exception that an original two-leaf door occupies the easternmost first story opening. Ten small windows originally located on the rear elevation were recently enclosed.

The building's common bond brick walls rise from a granite foundation which is punctuated by small windows illuminating the basement. A shallow tapered roof enframed by a low parapet wall covers the library.

After entering the building one proceeds up a short flight of stairs and either through a pair of French doors into the lobby or to the second floor via an enclosed stair to the right. On the first floor the circulation desk stands in front of the stacks. Large wooden square posts provide support in the absence of load-bearing walls. To the left and right, respectively, of the lobby is the reading room and children's room. Both are equipped with fireplaces and simple Colonial Revival style mantels. Behind these two rooms and on either side of the stack area are three small offices/work rooms and the side stair hall.

The second floor contains an auditorium with seating capacity for over two-hundred persons. At the east end is a raised stage framed by pilasters and two bronze plaques which bear the name of the community's Civil War veterans. The stage looks out over the original wooden chairs. Boxed beams create rectangular spaces on the ceiling of the auditorium.



## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1916-18 **Builder/Architect** Prescott and Sidebottom, Architects

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built between 1916 and 1918 as a memorial to Veranus and Mehitable Niles and to the memory of Civil War veterans from Jay, the Jay-Niles Memorial Library is one of the most notable buildings in this small cross-roads community. It holds further significance as a reminder of the past--and present--commitment to the provision of a public library for the citizens of North Jay.

The Jay-Niles Memorial Library was built at an apparent time of economic recovery in the Town of Jay. From a population of 1,686 persons in 1860, the Town fell to 1,291 inhabitants in 1880. However, by 1920 there were 3,152 residents. The 1916/17 edition of the Maine Register shows that in North Jay there was a Grange store, a general store, a dealer in horses, livestock and agricultural implements, a dry goods company, and an apple shipper and coal dealer. North Jay was also home to the Maine and New Hampshire Granite Corporation, I. C. Mayo and Son, stone contractors, and the North Jay Land and Lumber Company. There was also a billiard hall, a garage and a number of fraternal orders.

Veranus Niles (1812-1893) had come to Jay as a young child with his widowed mother. Later, he married Mehitable Harris (1805-1893). Niles established himself as a farmer and dealer in cattle and real estate. Three of his sons removed to Boston where they were partners in a general mercantile firm. One of the three, Louville Niles, and his brother S. H. Niles, who remained in North Jay where he was a merchant and real estate agent, founded the library in memory of their parents. Family tradition holds that it had been a long held wish of their sister Eliza Niles to provide for a reading room in the community. Louville Niles' residency and business ties in Boston undoubtedly influenced his decision to commission the Boston architectural firm of Prescott and Sidebottom to draw the plans for the library.

The building of the library in North Jay represented a significant commitment to a public facility made by private initiative. This action followed in the wake of a nation-wide interest in public libraries beginning in the late nineteenth century, an interest fostered in large part by the gifts of steel-maker Andrew Carnegie. There are, however, a number of records which indicate that there was a library, probably a subscription library, in North Jay as early as 1850. The 1871 edition of the Maine State Year-Book lists the North Jay Library and its mid-nineteenth century founding date. A number of letters also survive to indicate the existence in the mid-1870s of the Jay Social Library. The duration of these two associations is not presently known. The present library continued to function until the 1970s. It was unused until 1980 when the Town committed itself to repairing and maintaining the building and its collections.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Lawrence, Rev. Benjamin F., History of Jay, Maine. Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1912.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Wilton, Maine, 1968

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	9
---	---

4	0	1	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	9	3	3	2	8	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is shown on Town of Jay Tax Map 29, Lot 42, and includes the library only and not the fire station.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1987

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration









